



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## 12/19/2013 Minutes

### VISION 2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP

Meeting Minutes 12/19/13

2nd Flr Conference Room

Senior Center

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ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Co-Chair), David Garbarino (Co-Chair), Pete Howard (Secretary)

DISCUSSION OF MEETING LOCATION: We have been told that the Senior Center Meeting Room will not be available for meetings next year. We have inquired but received no explanation. All agree that this is a very good place for us to meet.

VISION 2020 BUDGET: Gordon, responding to some comments by Mary Harrison, has proposed a detailed budget (hard copy not provided) which would list all the annual expenses. Some of these, such as postage and renting the Town Hall auditorium, are included in other budgets and would not be included in an appropriation to Vision 2020 but rather listed as offsets. Gordon believes that the organization requires an approved budget to be legitimate and to validate its role in Town planning and development. A FRTG priority is to develop improved financial transparency. Pete suggested that at least as important to the moral of the organization would be regular attendance at Standing Committee meetings by senior Town leaders. For about 15 years this support was provided regularly by the Planning Director, Alan McClennan.

REVIEW OF DRAFT MASTER PLAN - INTERIM REPORT: Members reviewed Pete's draft and made excellent corrections & revisions. Pete combined the input & printed a hard copy on Vision 2020 letter head paper (Ref 1). The Co-Chairs signed it and David mailed it. Pete reported that as of Monday, 12/9, Carol Kowalski had the email version but not yet the hard copy.

WARRANT ARTICLE ORDER: We are concerned that the ARB articles, very important to encouraging expansion of our tax base, are the first articles discussed before the new members become familiar with the Town Meeting process and personalities. They often get a unsatisfactory hearing. These articles are very important to broadening the tax base, which we think the Town sorely needs. After a recent discussion with Gordon, Pete volunteered to discuss our concerns with Town leaders. He has met with the Moderator, the Director of Planning & Community Development, The Chair of the BoS, and The Town Manager. All understand our concerns and are sympathetic. The Selectmen have the final say, but the Town Manager & Board of Selectmen Administrator shape the warrant. We discussed what order we would prefer and how the Town Meeting might modify the order by tabling. Our preferred order is routine articles, 10 registered voter articles, Selectmen articles, ARB articles and FinCom articles. Gordon will sort last year's warrant in this way and prepare a mock revised warrant for task force for review in January. Pete will discuss w/ Marie Krepelka as soon as Gordon's work is ready.

FIANCIAL PLAN REVIEW: Gordon provided a variety of comments and ideas.

- .. Make the structural deficit more visible in the long range plan.
- .. Modify the conventional wisdom that Arlington is fully built out. It is not fully built up. See Coolidge Corner in Brookline as a targeted development density/strategy.
- .. Make sure the inclusion of the W&S MBTA debt costs on our tax bills is not distorting our place in the comparisons to other communities. The comparisons that might be affected are tax burden/capita, municipal growth factor, expenses/capita.
- .. Provide sensitivity analysis to estimated revenues & expenses including new growth, health insurance, local aid
- .. Show Symmes payments as income and appropriate to Symmes debt.
- .. Provide a complete listing of all Town properties not used mostly for Town purposes, Show associated rents or other income & related expenses.
- .. List payments in lieu of taxes & payers.
- .. Correct an FY13/FY14 error in Recreation department section.
- .. Provide more detail in the Pension Board report.
- .. Consider centralized snow (town/school/fire et al properties) plowing for efficiency.

- .. Provide more detail for W&S
- .. Discuss actual expenses where budget exceeded. Explain how these expenses were paid.
- .. Make a simple appropriation to OPEB. Drop the rational.

Pete to include these topics in the draft letter he presented in September for discussion in January.

NEXT MEETING: Jan 16 - Location Jefferson Cuter House Gallery - Meetings held monthly, 3rd Thursdays 7:30 PM